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RUSSIANS WARY ON FOREIGNERS

Briton's Trial Is Evidence
Confusion Still Exists

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MOSCOW, July 24—The public trial of a young British intellectual charged with subversion has given vivid evidence of the confusion still present in the minds of loyal Soviet Communists about foreigners.

On the one hand, Soviet society has opened its doors to outsiders over the last decade to an extent unimaginable under the rigid years of Stalinist isolation.

But the process of opening a closed society has produced uneasiness and strain. The age-old wariness of Russian citizens about what foreigners are doing in their midst has apparently not been overcome.

Gerald Brooke, 27 years old, a lecturer in Russian literature who came here as a tourist, was sentenced yesterday to five years' detention for anti-state activities. His lawyer said today that he might appeal.

Much of what Mr. Brooke confessed to would be punishable in some way in Western countries as well. It amounted to participation in attempts to mobilize Soviet citizens to overthrow their government.

Statements Provide Clue

The things said about him, both in the courtroom and in the official press, gave an insight into the nature of the deeper stress that Russian authorities apparently believe foreigners present.

For one thing, Mr. Brooke believed in God, so the trial prosecutor said, and among the young tourist's seemingly suspicious activities were visits to Moscow churches.

He asked many questions on these visits, the court was told. He wanted to know how much altar candles cost, and he wanted to know the age of Russian priests and their attitude toward the Communist regime.

Clearly, the implication was that the subversive organization that Mr. Brooke admitted representing and its alleged clients among Western intelligence agencies were looking for institutions receptive to anti-Soviet mobilization.

Aside from churches, Mr. Brooke asked questions everywhere. He wanted to know what kind of radios people had, what their living conditions were like. The answers, the prosecutor said, were "neatly entered into his notebook."

This is the sort of activity that would be considered normal of any journalist or alert traveler in the West, yet in the Soviet context it seemed to be grounds for suspicion.

Prosecutor Cites Questions

Supposedly feeling evidence of how subversive organizations overseas are trying to use any foreigners in the Soviet Union for their hostile activity came from the prosecutor, who noted that foreign correspondents in Moscow had telephoned public organizations to "ask provocative questions."

The point where idle of professional curiosity becomes active collection of intelligence has never been defined anywhere. Here, clearly, the suspicions come more quickly.

Pravda, the Communist newspaper, commented that the Brooke trail "will be a clear warning to all those tourists coming from abroad who might hope to put over some shady deal in our country and then escape scot free."

Brook's example should help those 'gentlemen' to adopt a more cautious attitude toward the 'tempting' offers of bourgeois intelligence agencies," the newspaper said.

The supposed ubiquity of intelligence operatives in the West, and their interest in subverting any Soviet citizen they can find, was already made clear in 1960 when Izvestia, the Soviet Government newspaper, warned Russian travelers:

"In Europe there are groups which will try to give you political propaganda."

There has been no suggestion here that contacts with the outside world should be cut back again. Soem observers doubt that this could now be feasible, with the younger generation of Russians eagerly grasping at anything foreign.

Exchange programs of all kinds are on the increase and the Government travel agency, Intourist, is eagerly trying to make the Soviet Union attractive to tourists and to their hard currency.

But when the newspapers are full of the allegedly evil deeds that at least some foreigners have on Soviet society, it is hard to see how a loyal Russian can feel entirely comfortable in the presence of an outsider.